To: R2 EPA Region 2 (EPA Staff)[R2_EPA_Region_2_EPA_Staff@epa.gov]
From: Rodriguez, Elias
Sent: Thur 3/17/2016 1:15:07 PM
Subject: News Clips (PFOA)

Second lawsuit filed against companies accused of PFOA contamination in Hoosick Falls

March 15, 2016

HOOSICK FALLS, N.Y. (NEWS10) – The two companies being blamed for the PFOA contamination in Hoosick Falls are facing a new lawsuit.

Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics and Honeywell International are already facing a lawsuit by the firm Weitz and Luxenberg. Now, two people living in the village have filed lawsuits of their own.

Lisa Tifft and Marilyn Peckham allege the two companies are responsible for the water contamination.

The law firm representing Tifft and Peckham sent the following statement to NEWS 10 ABC:

"We look forward to obtaining justice for Ms. Tifft, Ms. Peckham and all of the people in Hoosick Falls who were given unsafe water."

New PFOA data more troubling for North Bennington

WNYT Staff

03/16/2016 6:41 PM

NORTH BENNINGTON, Vt. - The results from a second round of water sampling in North Bennington are in and they're even more troubling than the first time around.

A meeting room at Bennington College that can hold 250 people was packed for meeting to address concerns of people with private wells testing positive for PFOA.

It is really tough to comprehend the community's water contamination crisis. PFOA was found in people's private wells. In some cases, the levels found were astronomical.

Of the 67 private wells sampled, 52 had levels of PFOA higher than the state's safe level of 20 parts per trillion. Those numbers ranged from 39 parts per trillion to 2,730 parts per trillion. At the highest level, that's 137 times the state's safe level for PFOA. Three wells tested for less than 20 parts per trillion and no PFOA was detected at all in 12 of the wells.

These results come from peoples' private wells in a mile and a half area outside the suspected source of the contamination, the ChemFab plant.

The Department of Health has been going door to door to talk to homeowners and explain what the results mean and to make plans to have filtration systems put in.

The state of Vermont has also been taking samples of soil from homes and businesses and say people will have those results in a few weeks.

NewsChannel 13's Jessica Layton takes you inside the meeting on WNYT.com, our 10 p.m. show on My 4 and NewsChannel 13 Live at 11.

Frequently Asked Questions about PFOA and Agricultural Products

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Department of Environmental Conservation is working with other state agencies to determine the nature and extent of PFOA contamination before taking the step to test local agricultural products.

The Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets has provided the following information about the possible impacts to agricultural products based on the scientific literature available.

What are potential impacts to corn or hay crops grown on soils with elevated levels of PFOA?

Studies show that corn and hay have the ability to take up PFOA and can accumulate this contaminant to levels many times higher than the soil concentration, even when PFOA soil concentrations are low. Generally the higher the concentration of PFOA in the soil, the higher the concentration could be in the plants.

What are potential impacts to milk from a cow ingesting feed and water containing PFOA?

The scientific literature suggests that if lactating cows and sheep are switched to clean feed and water sources, within five days the level of PFOA in their milk should be reduced.

What are potential impacts to meat from a dairy animal that has consumed PFOA contaminated feed or water?

The scientific literature suggests that cattle and sheep should be given clean feed and water for at least 21 days prior to slaughter to minimize exposure to PFOA.

Is it OK to eat vegetables from my garden?

While no direct testing of garden soils or vegetables has been done yet, scientific studies show that PFOA uptake differs among types of produce. While leaves and stems of most plants apparently accumulate PFOA from soil they are grown in, the storage compartments (grain, fruit, tubers) show much lower PFOA levels – the higher the soil concentration of PFOA, the higher the concentration of PFOA in the plants.

Root and leafy vegetables also tend to adhere soil to the surface of the produce. If PFOA is found in soil, thoroughly washing root and leafy green vegetables with bottled water will further

reduce exposure to PFOA from growing produce in soil contaminated with PFOA and/or watering produce gardens with PFOA contaminated water. One could also peel root vegetables prior to consumption.

Are the eggs from my home chicken flock OK to eat?

Chickens will take up PFOA from contaminated feed, water and ingested soil. PFOA may stay in the body of chickens for more than 30 days, even after being switched to a PFOA-free diet and environs. PFOA will transfer to eggs to a level that is proportional to their exposure, primarily in the yolk of contaminated eggs. Chickens should be given clean feed, water and environs for 30 days to minimize exposure to PFOA in eggs.

Can I have my soil and agricultural products tested?

The Department of Environmental Conservation is working with other state agencies to determine the nature and extent of the contamination before taking the step to test local agricultural products. This approach allows the State to identify the impacted areas and provide assistance to residents within those areas. The Agency of Agriculture is developing a plan for sampling agricultural commodities within the impacted areas.

What about maple syrup?

No information is available in the scientific literature regarding uptake of PFOA in maple trees. The Vermont Agriculture and Environmental Laboratory (VAEL) is developing a method to test for PFOA in maple syrup and, potentially, sap. Once the nature and extent of contamination is determined, the Agency of Agriculture will develop a sampling plan to test maple sugaring operations within the impacted areas.

Contaminated water and livestock

If your groundwater source used to water livestock is contaminated with PFOA, you need to obtain a source of clean water:

1. Fill a livestock tank or similar food grade container with the clean water and use that as your source for livestock - OR -

2. If your kitchen sink water has a PFOA-removing filter on it, you may attach a hose to that water source and use that for livestock -OR -

3. Check your yellow pages for local bulk water delivery companies that supply clean water.

If you have further questions about PFOA and agricultural products, contact:

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DEC testing soil for PFOA at daycare in North Bennington

March 16, 2016

NORTH BENNINGTON, Vt. (NEWS10) – Soil sampling for PFOA continued in North Bennington on Wednesday, including soil at a village daycare.

The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation was in North Bennington on Wednesday with soil containers to test the soil near the old ChemFab site. Employees tested soil at nearby homes, playgrounds and farms.

People in the area all have high anxiety over the PFOA contamination problem.

"Well, I'm just worried because of how close we are, and the kids being outside playing in the dirt," Bennington resident Jaime Racicot said. "If the contamination could have any effect on them with skin contact."

Racicot's grandson attends the daycare where soil was sampled from the playground area.

The daycare is just yards away from the old ChemFab site in North Bennington. It's believed to be the source of PFOA that was found in private wells in the village.

"They said our well was at 300 parts per trillion," North Bennington resident Kacey Poitras said.

Three hundred parts per trillion is well over Vermont's state guideline for PFOA of 20 ppt. Poitras is concerned for her stepson.

"So he's been drinking it and tubby time," she said. "I just get worried about what that's going to do for him."

On Wednesday, the DEC was also working on gaining access to homes near ChemFab as well as the ChemFab site itself for more soil sampling.

"I've read many things that say it doesn't really want to stay in the soil, and it will migrate with the water down the water table," Richard Spiese with Vermont DEC said. "But I've seen other reports that say people have found it in soil."

Spiese is running the testing operations in North Bennington. He's listening to everyone's questions.

"Is it in our food, and our maple syrup has been a good question," he said. "I mean, that's a Vermont trademark, and so we want to know is it or isn't it, and we're taking steps to try and

figure that out."

A community meeting will be held at 6 p.m. Wednesday night at Bennington College. The governor as well as the DEC commissioner is expected to be there to answer more questions.

Getting answers on PFOA safety levels

By Torie Wells Wednesday

WRGB

March 16th 2016

PETERSBURGH-Just this week, Rensselaer County released results from 50 samples, taken at private homes in Petersburgh. The County said 20 tested above the Regional EPA guidance of 100 ppt, 30 tested below.

That is the level the Regional EPA office set two months ago for the chemical, which is not federally regulated. In 2009, the EPA set a health advisory level of 400 ppt, for short term exposure.

Over in North Bennington, the State of Vermont is recommending residents not drink the water if the level is above 20 ppt.

"Why shouldn't it be the same? We're twenty miles from Vermont," said Bonnie Cross, from Petersburgh.

"We need clarification on that. Just pick it. You have the scientists, EPA, we want a national standard because this shouldn't be a question for anyone," said Governor Andrew Cuomo, on Sunday when he visited Hoosick Falls.

Governor Cuomo said he sent a letter to the EPA, with New Hampshire and Vermont's Governor. It asks the EPA to "expeditiously review the best available science on this contaminant, and provide uniform guidance to states that our health and environmental officials can use in assessing the safety of our drinking water."

CBS6 News asked the EPA, when that guidance could be coming. A spokesperson sent a statement saying, "The EPA is currently using the best science to develop lifetime health advisory levels for PFOA and PFOS, which the agency expects to release in spring 2016. When issued, the lifetime health advisory for PFOA will supersede the provisional health advisory of 400 parts per trillion for PFOA issued in 2009. Lifetime health advisories serve as guidance and are benchmarks for determining if concentrations of chemicals in tap water from public utilities are safe for public consumption. They provide state, local and tribal governments with non-regulatory guidance to make decisions on a local basis in cases where a chemical is not federally regulated.

The EPA is currently working with communities across the U.S. to monitor for the presence of six perfluorinated compounds in drinking water, including PFOA and PFOS, under the

Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule. EPA has worked to share results from this monitoring to enable state and local decision making on how best to address these unregulated contaminants."

PhillyTrib.com/ AP

Activists demand action against industrial chemical in water

Bottled water for distribution to town residents is piled up at the Petersburgh Municipal Complex in Petersburgh, N.Y. PFOA, long used in the manufacuring of Teflon pans, Gore-Tex jackets, ski wax, and many other products has turned up in the water in factory towns around the country like Petersburgh, impacting drinking water. — AP Photo/Mike Groll

March 15, 2016 5:37 pm

AP/Mary Esch

ALBANY, N.Y. — Prized for its ability to make things super-slick, it was used for decades in the manufacture of Teflon pans, Gore-Tex jackets, ski wax, carpets and the linings of pizza boxes and microwave popcorn bags.

Now, with the suspected cancer-causing chemical PFOA being phased out in the U.S., it is still very much around, turning up in the water in factory towns across the country — most recently in upstate New York and Vermont — where it is blamed by residents for cancers and other maladies.

The latest cases have brought renewed demands that the Environmental Protection Agency regulate PFOA the way it does arsenic, lead and dozens of other contaminants, and set stringent, enforceable limits on how much of the substance can be in drinking water.

“Where is the government that is supposed to protect people and the environment? It’s an outrage,” said Tracy Carluccio of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network, which uncovered PFOA, or perfluorooctanoic acid, in tap water in New Jersey a decade ago.

In their defense, EPA officials said that the agency has been considering for years whether regulations are needed for PFOA and related perfluorinated chemicals, but that it is a drawn-out testing and evaluation process dictated by the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. In the meantime, the EPA has taken action around the country to fine companies and force them to clean up such chemicals.

For now, there are no mandatory limits on how much PFOA, also called C8, can be in drinking water. The same goes for its cousin perfluorooctane sulfonate, or PFOS, which is used in firefighting foam. The Pentagon is checking for traces of PFOS in the water at 664 U.S. military sites where fire or crash training has been conducted.

As part of its review of such chemicals, the EPA ordered nationwide testing of water supplies in 2013.

Of 4,764 water supplies, 103 systems in 29 states had trace amounts of PFOA, but none exceeded 400 parts per trillion, EPA's advisory level for short-term exposure — water you drink for only a few weeks. Seven had levels slightly over 100 ppt, the new advisory level for long-term exposure — for the water you drink for years — that the EPA is expected to set this spring.

But the EPA's national survey didn't tell the whole story.

Towns the size of Hoosick Falls, New York, whose water supply serves just 4,500 people, weren't included in the testing. Its PFOA level of 600 ppt was discovered in village wells in 2014 only because residents, concerned about what they perceived as a high cancer rate in the plastics factory town, demanded testing.

In January, after the lead crisis in Flint, Michigan, focused national attention on water contamination, EPA and New York officials warned people in Hoosick Falls not to drink the water. The state is promising a new water supply with a price tag of $10 million.

More recently, testing turned up PFOA at about 100 ppt in drinking water in nearby Petersburgh, New York, and North Bennington, Vermont, which also had plastics plants. On Tuesday, Vermont officials said a second round of water testing in North Bennington yielded readings of up to 2,730 ppt.

Michael Hickey, a local insurance underwriter, exposed the contamination in Hoosick Falls, a bucolic community near the Vermont state line known as the hometown of folk artist Grandma Moses.

"My father died of kidney cancer. My grandmother had kidney cancer," Hickey said. "My concern isn't really about me; it's about my 5-year-old son."

At the least, health and environmental advocates say, communities that have factories and other installations that used the chemical should test their water.

"I would consider it an urgent priority to decrease exposures," said Philippe Grandjean, a researcher at the Harvard School of Public Health who believes the 100 ppt safe-exposure level EPA is proposing is still 100 times too high. — (AP)

Vermont health officials, for example, have set that state's PFOA level at 20 ppt, based on the same research the EPA is relying on.

Class-action lawsuits have been filed as far back as 2001 against companies such as 3M and DuPont over PFOA contamination of water near factories or disposal sites in a host of communities, including Decatur, Alabama, and Cottage Grove, Minnesota.

In settling a lawsuit involving 70,000 people in West Virginia and Ohio, DuPont agreed in 2004 to install filters to remove PFOA from water systems in six communities surrounding its Parkersburg, West Virginia plant. In October, DuPont was found liable for a woman's kidney cancer in the first of 3,500 lawsuits filed by people with diseases they blame on the contamination.

The American Water Works Association, a water industry group, believes that nationwide regulation of PFOA isn't needed but that testing for the substance at manufacturing sites would

be prudent, spokesman Greg Kail said.

Advanced filtration systems to remove PFOA can cost millions of dollars up front, plus tens of thousands a year in operating costs.

3M invented the chemical 1947, and it became so ubiquitous that more than 98 percent of Americans have traces in their blood, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 3M began to phase it out in 2002 in response to health concerns raised by the EPA. DuPont and eight other companies later agreed to do the same by 2015.

Studies funded by the DuPont settlement concluded PFOA is a “probable cause” of six illnesses, including thyroid disease and kidney and testicular cancer. Those studies were based on people who drank water with PFOA at a level of 50 ppt for a year — half what the EPA is expected to set as the safe level. Other studies have linked PFOA to low birthweight and other problems in children.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo warned that PFOA and other chemicals will probably be discovered in the water across the state and country.

“We allowed waste disposal in fashions that, in retrospect, were not prudent,” he said, “and now, in many ways, we are paying the price as a society.” — (AP)

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